

Exhibit 147

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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RUTH SCHWARTZ, *et al.*

Plaintiffs,

-against-

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN,

Defendant.
-----X

Case No. 18-cv-1349 (RDM)

DECLARATION OF RUTH SCHWARTZ

I, Ruth Schwartz, declare pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746 and subject to the penalties of perjury as follows:

1. My full name is Ruth Ellen Schwartz.
2. I am 48 years old and was born on [REDACTED] 1971.
3. I am a citizen of the United States and have been such at all times relevant to this action. I have a Master's degree in Physical Therapy.
4. My son Ezra Schwartz, who was born on [REDACTED] 1997 and was a citizen of the United States at all times relevant to this action, was killed in a terrorist attack on November 19, 2015 near Gush Etzion Junction, in Israel.
5. My husband Ari and I have 5 children: Mollie, Ezra, H[REDACTED], E[REDACTED], and A[REDACTED].
6. Ezra was the heart of our family. He was loud and funny and confident and friendly. Ezra was a unique friend to many different people. He had an innate ability to engage with people of all ages: children, adults, the elderly and his peers. He had a big smile and loved making people happy.

7. I was lucky to be his mother. He was a very good son. He liked to share his life with me. Ezra had many interests, and if he liked something he wanted others, including me, to like it too. For example, he loved Harry Potter, and I remember the pride on his face when he realized I was reading the series for a second time. He loved to share a song with me that he liked or watch a movie again with me if he had enjoyed it.

8. Ezra also desperately wanted me to love football. He reviewed the positions and the players with me and got excited on game day insisting we all watch together. He even wanted me to watch the highlights at the end of the week.

9. Ezra was an incredible skier and great baseball player, and he enjoyed mentoring his brothers and younger teammates. Ezra made everything fun! He was everyone's favorite brother. He and Mollie were very close, and his brothers looked up to him and wanted to be like him. He was a great brother.

10. Ezra was scheduled to be in Israel for a year before he started Rutgers University. Ezra was attending a seminary ("Yeshiva") program that valued learning, volunteering and traveling the country. He had just started a new learning project, and he was busy volunteering. He ran basketball clinics for underprivileged boys, he painted at a lone soldier's home near his Yeshiva, and he volunteered to do physical work to help beautify the nature preserve that was created in memory of the 3 Israeli boys who were kidnapped and killed in 2014. This was where he was heading in a van with 5 other boys from his Yeshiva on the day he was killed.

11. The day before Ezra was murdered, I spoke to him on the phone. Most of Ezra's friends had gone to Israel for the year, but they were all in different programs, and they did not get to see each other often. Ezra was also making new friends. He told me that he was happy and that

he felt safe. He told me that he and his girlfriend from high school, Ilana, were doing great, he was excited to continue experiencing the year in Israel, and was doing his best to make the year special.

12. Ezra was excited for college the next year. He noted that his life was changing and nothing would ever be the same as it was in high school because the next year all his friends were going to be in different places. He wanted to make the most of this year before everything changed. Ezra also told me that he had really started to miss us. It had been 2 ½ months since he left Sharon, MA to go to Israel. It had been 2 ½ months since I last hugged my son.

13. Ezra was an 18 year old boy on his way to do volunteer work at the nature preserve, Oz V'Gaon, in Israel when he was killed on November 19, 2015 by a Palestinian terrorist who wanted to kill as many Jews as possible.

14. Ari called me at work to tell me that Ezra had been shot. He was screaming into the phone, "Ezra was attacked!" He told me that Ezra had been shot and that it was bad. The chain of events that day are complex, as first we had to find out how badly hurt Ezra was in order to make decisions. There was confusion at first about which American boy on the school van was hurt.

15. We had to tell our other children that Ezra was hurt before they found out from someone else or social media. Ari dealt with that for the most part. I just sat on the floor of my living room, and my friends starting coming over. I was still hoping that it wasn't true. I wanted to hear that Ezra was going to be okay. I wanted him to come home. It took several hours to confirm that Ezra had in fact been killed. My sister, who lives in Jerusalem, called me after she identified my son. Ezra had been murdered. My son was dead.

16. I will always feel the trauma of that day. I often tear up thinking about my 3 young sons coming home early from school that day. I was still sitting on my living room floor, and all 3 of them fell on me crying. H■■■■ was 13, E■■■■ was 11, and A■■■ was 9. Mollie came home from

college that night; she was a freshman at the University of Maryland. The image of her walking up the driveway looking so sad and disheveled and the feeling of holding her in my arms crying together still haunts me.

17. We were all so distraught. I was already worried about the trauma my children would bear. I was afraid this terrible tragedy would change us all, and I worried about how we would survive Ezra's murder as a family and how we would live without him. In addition, I worried about Ezra. He was still in Israel and alone without me. He would arrive home Sunday morning for his funeral. He was alone, and I felt helpless. I still worry about us all.

18. From the moment we heard that Ezra had been killed and that we would never see him again our friends took care of us. They carried us through the first few weeks and beyond. They made food, they moved furniture, they cleaned our house, and they managed the multitudes of people who came to make Shiva visits from all over the country. They took care of our children. Our friends and family continue to support us and remember Ezra, together with us.

19. We decided to send the children back to school about a week and a half after the attack. They needed to be in their normal environment. The school social workers were very supportive and helpful to each of them. Ari returned to work that day as well.

20. I stayed home for a few more weeks. I returned to my regular work schedule in January 2016. It was hard to go back to work. It was hard to stay home. Nothing felt right, even driving my car to the grocery store felt strange. All I wanted to do was talk about Ezra. All I felt that I should do was visit Ezra. I needed to visit him at the cemetery every day. I am his mother. I wanted to cry all day. I wanted time to go backward. I wanted my son to be alive. I still want this.

21. Recently, my friend called me and told me her daughter had named her baby boy, Ezra. I thought to myself, I need to tell Ezra! He would love that! He loved babies. There have

been quite a few babies named for Ezra. It is very special. I feel so proud and honored that people want their precious children to emulate Ezra's wonderful characteristics. Many of those parents have noted Ezra's love of life and love of all people. His legacy is certainly his smile, his love of fun, sports, and his genuine desire to help make people happy. Ezra was happy if his friends and family were happy.

22. In December 2015, approximately 30 days after Ezra's death, we all went to Israel to visit the places that were special to him. We had several memorial events in his honor in Israel. Each one was emotional and meaningful. Ari and I spoke about Ezra, and on December 31, 2015 we sat in a big circle with Ezra's friends and they shared many stories and memories from their lives with him.

23. We went to the nature preserve that Ezra had planned to go to the day he was killed, and we saw the exact place on the road where he was killed. We had the opportunity to visit places with his friends that were important to Ezra. One place in particular was the home of an elderly woman that befriended Ezra on a bus; he subsequently helped her carry her grocery bags to her home. In response to seeing her home he decided to arrange ongoing visits and help for her from some of his friends. We went to visit this women and give her some money in Ezra's memory.

24. We also visited a park in Jerusalem that was special to Ezra and Ilana, his girlfriend. We visited the Yeshiva program Ezra was attending and met his teachers and new friends. These friends are still a part of our life. Twelve or so young men whom Ezra met just 2 ½ months before his murder visit us for the weekend every November 19th.

25. Ezra's friends from high school, camp and Yeshiva come to our house to visit us often, just to be with us; they share stories but they really just want to support us. They take our younger boys out to Dave & Busters, out to dinner or they just hang out at our house and play

wiffle ball, basketball, football, ping pong or watch sports together. It is a huge source of pride and a true testament to Ezra that each of his friends wants to keep him present in their lives.

26. Our family structure and dynamic is different without Ezra. Each Mother's Day my gift would be a photo shoot in the backyard of my 5 beautiful children. We do not have this photo shoot anymore. The hardest part of Ezra's death is that it is forever. It's not short term because Ezra is away at school or lives far away. It was not his choice. It was not our choice. He was taken from us by evil. Our family is broken forever. I will never have all my children sitting around the table nor will we enjoy a family vacation together.

27. Ezra will never be able to tell me about his day, or about his thoughts and feelings. He will never be able to share with me the things he loves. We will never get to just live everyday life together as a complete family. I will never get to take that picture or experience Mother's Day or any other day with all my children. My children will never have their brother. Their lives have been changed forever. They will bear the trauma of that terrible day and Ezra's absence for their entire lives. Ezra's life and death will affect all of their decisions.

28. Ezra had so much potential for a wonderful life. He was good at so many things. Ezra had a great memory. We find ourselves all the time saying, "Ezra would remember." It is very difficult to think about the things Ezra did not get to do. He did not get to finish his gap year in Israel which was on track to be an amazing year. He had great friends and a wonderful relationship with his girlfriend. He did not get to go to college. He had planned to attend Rutgers University Business School. He did not get to marry or have children.

29. Ezra also did not get to experience all the special family occasions with us, such as two of his younger brothers' Bar Mitzvahs nor could he attend his sisters' college graduation or her white coat ceremony as she began medical school this August. Ezra did not get to attend one

of his closest friend's wedding, last August, where he was given the honor of 'honorary groomsman.' He is missed deeply by so many of his friends.

30. He has missed so much, and we have missed him. I think of him every minute of every day. He is part of all my moments. I cry every day. Some days it is a few tears and others it is too many tears and too much emotion to function properly. When I am sad I am thinking of Ezra. When I am happy I am thinking of Ezra. I am actually never completely happy. I may smile or laugh and even enjoy something but it is always tainted with sadness or longing. Ezra is on my mind and in my heart always. The tears emerge at the happiest moments as that is when I miss him the most. I feel a deep emptiness. I miss my son terribly. There is always a part of me mourning his absence.

31. I feel proud of Ezra and of our relationship. I still visit him at the cemetery nearly every day. As my car approaches the place where he is buried, my mind tricks me. Every time, I expect to see Ezra waiting there, with his big smile and his arms open wide, running toward me with his legs practically dancing with excitement.

Dated: October 13, 2019

/s/ Ruth Schwartz
Ruth Schwartz

Exhibit 148

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
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Plaintiffs,

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Case No. 18-cv-1349 (RDM)

DECLARATION OF MICHAEL BENZAKEIN

I, Michael Benzakein, declare pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746 and subject to penalties of perjury as follows:

1. On November 19, 2015, I was 18 years old, riding in a van that was targeted by a terrorist shooter. My friend and roommate was killed, but I survived. That attack has materially changed my life.

2. I was born in New York on [REDACTED] 1997. I am the second of four children. My brother, Jacques, is a year older than me, and I have two younger sisters, Sabrina and L [REDACTED]. My mother, a mortgage officer, grew up in Morocco; my father, a podiatrist, grew up in Egypt.

3. Growing up, I went to a private Jewish high school. Many students at my school typically spend a “gap year” in Israel after graduating high school, and most go to one religious seminary (“yeshiva”) or another. Like many of my classmates, I wanted to go to Israel for my gap year, but I preferred a college program instead of a yeshiva. My high school rabbi convinced me that I could always take college courses, but I would never have the opportunity to dedicate a year to learning in yeshiva again.

4. I picked the program called Ashreinu because it didn't focus on learning as much as other yeshivas did. It also offered a lot of opportunities to travel and do volunteer work. I knew two other seniors from my grade going to that program, and the three of us decided to room together.

5. The day on which I was scheduled to fly to Israel finally arrived. I was excited, but I was also nervous to be away from my family for an entire year. I had been to Israel once before, when I was about 13, but it had been a family trip for just a week. My parents drove me to the airport. My sisters were still sleeping, and I woke them up to say goodbye before I left. L ■■■ called me crying when I got to the airport because she felt bad that she hadn't come with us. My father gave me a blessing before we parted and cried.

6. I was the only person on the plane flying to Ashreinu until we landed in Canada, where about 20 students on the same program boarded. The plane landed in Israel, and we got off, dragging our suitcases behind us until we saw someone holding a sign with the name of our school.

7. We took a shuttle to the school and received our room assignments. In my room were Jason Geller – someone I knew from my neighborhood – another friend from my high school, and another student named Ezra Schwartz whom I hadn't met before. We dropped our things and boarded a bus, which took us to the Western Wall. There, I met more students and the school's rabbis and staff.

8. When we got back to school, we claimed our beds. There was one bed in each corner, and Ezra and I picked beds on opposite sides. I remember how excited he was about being in Israel for the year. He was from Sharon, Massachusetts and had three brothers and a sister. I once grabbed the phone while he was talking to his sister and introduced myself as a joke.

9. Ezra and I roomed together and also studied together. Our classes weren't very structured; we'd have time where we could pair off and pick a subject we wanted to learn about.

10. Our school's volunteering program became my favorite part of my time in Israel. On Mondays, I worked at a home for lone soldiers – soldiers in the Israel Defense Forces with no family in Israel; on Tuesdays, I worked in a mechanic shop that was struggling; and on Thursdays, I worked to revamp a memorial park dedicated to three Israeli teenagers who were kidnapped and murdered in 2014, the previous year. That was the park our van was heading to when we were attacked.

11. On November 19, 2015, the date of the attack, we had gone to Jerusalem in the morning for a special learning program. I remember the bus pulling away without Ezra on it, but he came running outside and climbed onboard. After the morning program was finished, Ezra went to pay a quick visit to his girlfriend, who was in a school nearby. We then went back to our school and had only a few minutes to change before heading to the memorial park.

12. A lot of people were too tired to go because we had woken up early that morning, and I ran from room to room trying to convince students to go. I climbed onto the van, where Jason was eating a granola bar. The driver told him to finish it outside. He got off, and Ezra and another student boarded. Ezra took Jason's seat in the van's third row. I sat in the front row. Ten of us usually volunteered at the park, but that day, only six of us went.

13. It was about 4:30pm when we started heading to the memorial park. The ride to Gush Etzion, the site where the three teenagers had been kidnapped and where the memorial park was located, normally took about half an hour. We liked working in the park and were looking forward to getting there, but one by one, people started falling asleep. I believe I was the only student awake during the drive. The traffic circle before the park frequently causes traffic to back

up, and I decided to wait until we cleared the circle before waking up my friends. The van inched forward. I knew the traffic could take as much as five minutes.

14. I was sitting with my head against the window looking at the entrance to Alon Shvut, a gated community a few yards from the memorial park. Suddenly, I heard what sounded like rocks hitting a metal shed. My first thought was that someone was throwing rocks at the van, and I was concerned. The noise got much louder and I saw the glass of one of the windows shatter. I immediately understood that someone was shooting at our van. I was terrified. I screamed “Get down!” and hit the floor. The van rocked back and forth as bullets pelted it. Some of the guys were frozen in their seats, and I yelled at them to get down. I picked up my phone and messaged my family’s group chat: “I love you.”

15. I thought I was going to die. Once I knew bullets were being fired, I couldn’t see any way that it would end with me surviving. I was almost impatient – when am I going to die already? It seemed clear as day that I was going to be killed.

16. I looked down the rows to see if anyone was hurt and saw that Ezra had fallen over so that his head rested in the seat across the aisle from the rest of his body. I saw so much blood pooling in the seat where his head lay. It trickled out of the seat and into the aisle. I thought he was trying to tell me something because his lips were moving. He was wearing headphones, and I crawled back to him to try to push them off his head, but then I realized I didn’t want to make anything worse. I started yelling “Call 911!”

17. I wanted to crawl to the door to see if the shooter was going to come onboard, but I could still hear shooting. Then I heard a crash – two cars had collided right in front of us. I heard some more gunshots and then silence before hearing Hebrew or Arabic being yelled. I lifted my head and saw people running by wearing green uniforms. I realized they were soldiers, and I

thought we might be safe. My reaction was of surprise, not relief. I had assumed I was going to die.

18. The soldiers came onto the van and asked us where we had heard the shots coming from. We pointed out Ezra and asked for a medic. The soldiers ushered us off the van.

19. We made our way across the street and saw someone on the ground being restrained by an Israeli soldier. I didn't know it was the shooter at first. I thought he was another victim of the shooting, and that the soldier was kneeling on him to stop the bleeding. We walked past a car and saw the driver inside slumped over the gear levers. He had also been shot.

20. The soldiers moved us farther down the street. I called my father, who was at work. He was already worried because he had seen my message on our family's group chat. He got very upset when I told him what was happening. I couldn't hear him well, and people were trying to move us, so I got off the phone quickly.

21. We were loaded onto one ambulance and then taken off the ambulance and loaded onto a different one. We had blood on us, I believe mostly from Ezra. I called my father again and told him that Ezra had been shot in the head. I told him about Ezra's lips moving and begged him to tell me what that meant, but he didn't give me a definitive answer.

22. We sat against one wall in the ambulance, which drove to the hospital with lights and sirens on. At one point, the metal back seat banged against the back of the ambulance, and my heart stopped. Media was waiting in front of the hospital for us so we were sent through a side door. They checked each of us over and removed shrapnel that had been lodged in my knee. I couldn't feel it, but I couldn't feel any other part of my body either. Adrenaline raced through me.

23. We were then corralled into a boardroom with a big table. Two psychologists – a man and a woman – asked us some questions and made sure we were able to speak to our parents. Someone, maybe the police, took down each of our accounts of what happened.

24. All this time, I kept asking how Ezra was, and they kept giving us answers to push us off. It was so frustrating. Finally, someone told us that Ezra had died. I was shocked, but not surprised. I had been convincing myself that Ezra would be fine, since I had seen him moving in the van. It was wishful thinking. We all went silent. I felt like someone had punched me in the gut. All I wanted to do was help him, but there was nothing to be done.

25. My brother was in Israel, and he came to visit me in the hospital. A few of my cousins who live in Israel came too. After I had spoken to my father from the scene, he had raced home, where my mother was. At the hospital, I called them using my brother's phone because my own phone kept buzzing with messages. I saw a message on my high school group chat that said "Michael Benzakein was shot in the head." When my mother picked up, she thought it was my brother and said into the phone: "I don't know if they've been told yet, but Ezra died." I told her it was me, and that I knew. We were quiet on the phone. I was in shock and didn't have a lot to say.

26. The hospital released us to the wife and son of our school's rabbi. We all sat shocked on the drive back to their house. They bought us food and I remember eating like a man who had been starving for days. Then I started responding to the barrage of text messages and phone calls.

27. I called the rabbi from my high school who had convinced me to go to Ashreinu. He kept apologizing to me like the attack was his fault. I called my best friend in the U.S. I called back my parents and spoke to my sisters.

28. My friends from school came to visit us, and we all sat in one big room. Those of us from the van told the rest of them what happened. We listened to each other's perspectives of the attack. I didn't sleep at all that night.

29. The next day was Friday. We spent that night and Shabbat (Saturday) at the rabbi's house. It felt surreal. It felt like I had asked a question and was waiting for an answer; like someone was going to tell me what had happened and what comes next.

30. On Saturday night, I went back to school to pack a suitcase. I was leaving that night to fly to Massachusetts for Ezra's funeral. Before I left, the three of us roommates took a picture in our room without Ezra.

31. There was a ceremony at the airport, which included a line to Ezra's casket. I got on the line, unsure of how I would say goodbye. When it was my turn, I put my hand on his casket. I remember getting goosebumps, but it didn't feel like closure. I didn't feel like I was saying goodbye to someone I had spent all day and night with. I just felt hit with the cold realization that my friend was lying in the flimsy plywood box that I was touching. Before boarding, security asked me why I had so few things in my suitcase. I told them I was flying to the U.S. for an unexpected funeral.

32. Ezra's casket was on my plane. His aunt, uncle, and cousins who lived in Israel were on the plane too, and I met them. When we landed in the U.S., I looked out the window and watched them unload Ezra's casket.

33. My parents met me at the airport and drove to me the house of a family friend so we could get ready for the funeral. Someone asked me to write a eulogy. I wrote about Ezra – how funny he was, and how kind – but I didn't end up speaking at the funeral.

34. Before the funeral, I met Ezra's family. They wanted to meet the boys who had been on the van with Ezra. I felt so uncomfortable; I didn't know if they were going to be upset with me. But his parents hugged us and said they were happy we were okay. I'm still amazed at how gracious they were when they were about to bury their own son.

35. After the funeral, we drove to the cemetery. Someone had brought some dirt from Israel, and we shoveled that into Ezra's grave, on top of his casket. After, we drove to Ezra's house, where his mother asked me to speak about what had happened. That's where I gave the eulogy that I had prepared. My parents drove me home afterward, and I fell asleep in the car. I woke up when we got to my house, where my sisters ran out to greet me. They were both crying.

36. I was home for three weeks. Friends and family came to visit me and wanted to know what had happened, and I had to tell the story over and over. I didn't sleep at night. I had nightmares about the attack and also nightmares that were not about the attack, but in which someone ended up dying. I felt constantly restless.

37. At some point while I was home, a woman named Sarri Singer came to visit. She was a victim of a suicide bomber in 2003 who started an organization which provides support to other terror victims and their families. She told me there's no textbook way of dealing with the aftermath of the attack and recommended that I visit a trauma specialist. I saw someone maybe three or four times. He was very nice, but I felt the same way after seeing him that I did before, so I saw no reason to keep going to see him.

38. I flew back to Israel, but things had changed for me. I still could not sleep. I lay in bed wide awake at night, and sometimes I'd move to Ezra's bed. I tried to attend a few classes but couldn't focus. I felt detached, like I was on the outside looking in. I didn't want to learn or

volunteer anymore. I didn't know what I was doing there. After just a few days, I packed up and flew home.

39. I had been admitted to the incoming September 2016 freshman class of New York Institute of Technology, and they wouldn't allow me to enter any earlier. I had nothing else to do, so I decided to take some college classes at Nassau Community College. I lost my spot at New York Institute of Technology because I wouldn't be coming in as a first semester freshman anymore. I tried to reapply, but they rejected me and I didn't really question their decision. I'm now at Stonybrook College. My grades are okay, but I can't pay attention for long. I try not to take subjects that relate to politics because that reminds me of the attack and I get upset.

40. I've changed since the attack. My religion used to be a priority for me; it was the reason I went to Israel for the year. I had been hoping to connect with my religion and with the State of Israel on a deeper level during that year, but after the attack, I became confused. I know I should be grateful that I was spared, but what I went through was so awful. We were on our way to volunteer when the attack happened and I couldn't reconcile that with what happened to Ezra. As a result, I lost faith and my religious observance declined significantly.

41. I also developed a temper. I now get upset about things that wouldn't have bothered me before. I'll be working on my car and something will go wrong and I'll start throwing things. If I can't hear someone on a phone call, it'll drive me crazy. I remember throwing my phone once when I couldn't hear the person I was speaking to. I developed road rage, which I never had before.

42. I startle more easily now than before the attack. I don't like being in crowded areas like Penn Station – the hair on the back of my neck will stand up when I'm there. I get nervous when I'm at sporting events or in school – I have to scan my surroundings constantly when I'm there.

43. Loud noises make me jump and set me on edge. My family's synagogue is right by a busy street and I can hear the traffic even when I'm sitting inside. It bothers me. If I'm at a table and someone drops a fork onto their plate, I'll jump. I hate it when I'm driving behind a truck and rocks fly up at my car. A lot of noises sound like gunshots to me. I was recently at a party and one of the songs playing had a noise that sounded like gunshots. It set me on edge.

44. Sleeping is still difficult for me. I still have nightmares. Sometimes I'm drowning in them, and sometimes someone else is. I'll have violent nightmares about friends or family members. I'll also have nightmares about war. Often, my nightmares will have religious symbols in them, like crosses and Stars of David, or fire and water. I've been told that I fidget a lot in my sleep since the attack. I remember taking a swing at someone who was trying to wake me up.

45. I think about the attack constantly. It hasn't let up at all. I don't think it ever will. I wake up thinking about it; I go to bed thinking about it; I think about it during the day. It's just etched in my mind. Everything I see is colored by the attack.

Date: October 16, 2019

/s/ Michael Benzakein
Michael Benzakein

Exhibit 149

4. I selected Yeshivat Ashreinu. I didn't want to spend my entire day learning, and Ashreinu's motto was "Torah, Chessed, Israel." We would learn "Torah" – bible study – along with other Judaic subjects in the mornings, and our afternoons were dedicated to "chedsed" and "Israel." "Chessed" translates as "acts of kindness," but can also mean public service or acts of charity, and students were given nine hours a week to participate in "chedsed" projects. To fulfill the "Israel" part of the motto, the rabbis at Ashreinu took us on trips every Tuesday. We traveled the whole country – up north to the city of Tzfat, and down to Eilat, Israel's most southern resort.

5. The "chedsed" internships turned out to be my favorite part of my year in Israel. I worked in a dog pound giving dogs their medication, renovated homes for "lone soldiers" serving in the Israel Defense Forces with no family in Israel, and built a hydroponic farm at a cooperative community of farmers. I also helped construct a memorial park dedicated to three Israeli teenagers who were kidnapped and murdered in 2014, the previous year. That was the park our van was heading to when we were attacked.

6. My entire four years of high school, I had been looking forward to going to Israel after graduation. I had only been away from my family twice – as a camper, and then a counselor, in a sleepaway camp during the summers before and after my senior year in high school. I loved both summers and would have gone when I was younger if my parents had been able to afford it. I had only been to Israel once before, when I was six. Aside from that family trip, I had only left the country to go to Canada once.

7. There were fewer than 40 boys attending Ashreinu that year, and many of them were taking the same flight I was. I knew only two others going with me, but that was okay. My goal was to make a lot of new friends.

8. I met Ezra Schwartz during our orientation at Ashreinu, and found out we were going to be roommates and seatmates for certain classes. Ezra and I became fast friends. He was easygoing and kind. He was also one of the funniest people I had ever met. Once I arrived in Israel for the gap-year program, I called my parents every other day, and would tell them about the community service projects I was working on and my new friends. On my sister's birthday, I handed Ezra the phone. My sister loves the Harry Potter series, and he knew the first chapter of the second book by heart. He honored her birthday by narrating the chapter to her over the phone.

9. Shortly before midnight, on the night before the attack, Ezra decided he needed candy. He begged me to come with him, and I told him he was nuts, that curfew started in five minutes. Like the goofball he was, he started fake sobbing. It was hard to say no to Ezra, and I went with him down the block to the candy store. Our errand for candy turned into an adventure of sorts when we tried to catch a kitten that had followed us to the store so we could take it back to our room. We were unsuccessful in our attempt to introduce a pet into our apartment, and we also got caught sneaking back into the school. Fortunately, we didn't get into trouble.

10. On the morning of November 19, 2015, we woke up early, at 6:00 a.m. Our school was taking us to a program called the "Discovery Seminar," which presents lectures on how Judaism and science can be harmonized. The speaker was Dr. Gerald Schroeder, an MIT physicist, whose lecture discussed the accounts of creation in the Book of Genesis and the Big Bang Theory.

11. We arrived back to school from the program at about 1:00 p.m. and prepared to leave for our community service project at a memorial park. The year before, Jewish communities worldwide had mourned when the bodies of the three Israeli teenagers were found two weeks after being kidnapped at a bus stop. The park we were heading to was a block away from the bus stop

where the teenagers had been kidnapped, and a memorial site at the park had been dedicated to them.

12. Every Thursday, about 14 of us would go to the park and help beautify it. For example, a truck would deliver paving stones which volunteers used to construct a pathway to the memorial. We also cleared out tree stumps and debris and performed other tasks to make the memorial more attractive and accessible.

13. Because we had woken up so early, only six of us decided to go to the park that day. I ran upstairs to my room to grab a granola bar, came back downstairs and climbed into the van. I sat in an aisle seat about three rows back, on the passenger side. The driver ordered me out of my seat and outside the van until I finished my food. I complied, and Ezra boarded the van and took the seat I had occupied. I got back into the van and sat in the window seat across the aisle from Ezra, on the driver's side. Two of my friends took the front row, and two more took the back row.

14. We were all tired. Ezra fell asleep in his aisle seat, and I nodded off with my head against the window. There was an aisle and one seat in my row separating us.

15. I woke up to what I thought was the sound of rocks being thrown against the window. Someone in the van was yelling: "Get down, get down!" Someone else was screaming: "Call 911!" Someone else was just screaming.

16. Then Ezra's window exploded.

17. I smelled what seemed to me like gunpowder. I recognized the smell from when my father had taken me to a shooting range when I was in high school. I immediately hit the floor. Everyone hit the floor except for Ezra. His head fell into the seat I had just abandoned for the floor, but he was still seated in his own seat. I saw a wound on the right side of his head, by his ear.

Before falling asleep, I had put my sweatshirt on the window seat next to me, and I grabbed it and pressed it to his head to staunch the bleeding. The sweatshirt became drenched in blood within seconds. Some part of me knew that Ezra was already dead. The wound was just way too big. Ezra started convulsing and then he fell into the aisle. I watched him, pressed against the wall of the van.

18. I was in shock. I don't remember feeling anything. All I wanted to do was not die. I knew the shooter was still outside the van, and I assumed that he knew there were more of us on board. I got on one knee with the plan that if the shooter boarded the bus, I'd be ready to attack him. I didn't know how I would have wrestled the gun away from him, but that was the only plan I could come up with.

19. After what seemed like hours, but was probably only minutes, Israeli soldiers boarded the bus. I lifted my head to make sure it was them and not the terrorist. I saw the driver still in his seat, with his hands frozen on the wheel. The soldiers came to where I was still on the ground and asked if I was okay, and I pointed at Ezra. They ushered all of us off the van and told us not to call anyone, but I called my father.

20. He didn't pick up, so I texted him: "Pick up NOW." He did, and I blurted out: "They hit Ezra." He told me to slow down and tell him what happened. My father works from home and was talking to me in his room. My sister was in her room and heard him on the phone, so she came into his room. While I was talking to my father, the soldiers took Ezra out of the van and blocked him from our view. They told us he was still alive and that they were taking him to Hadassah University Hospital. I asked why they weren't taking him to Shaare Zedek Medical Center, which was where they were going to take us. He told us that Hadassah had a better neurology department.

I think they knew that Ezra was already dead. My father asked me if I wanted him to come to Israel, and I told him no, that I'd be in Massachusetts for Ezra's funeral.

21. We were soon loaded onto an ambulance, and on the way to the hospital I noticed that I had glass in my right knee. Once in the hospital, they told me I also had glass in my neck. I was in shock; I hadn't noticed it hurting. The doctors removed the glass from my neck and knee with tweezers. One of the doctors spoke to my father on the phone, but I didn't listen to their conversation. My friends and I had been separated when we got to the hospital, and I wanted to know where they were. At that point, it seemed like the world found out what happened, and my phone was flooded with messages asking if I was okay. I answered a few messages and ignored the rest.

22. Finally, after about half an hour, we were all brought into a conference room. One of our rabbis from school came in too. Two therapists from the hospital came in to speak with us. Most of me knew that Ezra was dead, but I wanted someone to tell me. I kept begging someone to tell me. Instead, they told me he was in surgery.

23. Finally, we heard about Ezra. Someone – I have no idea who – came into the conference room and simply said: "Your friend is dead." I put my head down on the desk and cried.

24. We were in the hospital for at least two hours before they finally released us. We went back to our principal's house and slept there that night. We didn't want to go back to school and answer everyone's questions. We didn't watch the news. Another school in the area baked us a cake and sent it to us. I arranged my flight to Boston for Ezra's funeral.

25. We went back to school the next day, on Friday. It felt good to be with everyone, but we slept at our principal's house again that night. We spent Saturday at school again, and that

night, after Shabbat (Saturday) ended, I packed my clothes for my flight to Boston. Ezra's aunt who lives in Israel came to our school and packed his things. I helped her carry his bags down to the car. Three of my friends from the van were flying with me to Boston, along with our principal. Ezra's aunt and uncle and cousins were on the flight too. There was a ceremony at the airport for Ezra, with speeches and singing.

26. I didn't sleep on the flight to Boston. I spoke to Ezra's family and tried to help them out as much as I could. We landed at 5:00 a.m. My parents and sister met me at the airport, and we took a shuttle van back to their hotel. I remember feeling very nervous on that van, and I sat on the floor.

27. Thousands of people attended Ezra's funeral, which was also livestreamed. I sat next to Ezra's girlfriend, who was sobbing. I tried to talk to her.

28. I stayed home for about a month after Ezra's funeral. My family was contacted by Sarri Singer, a victim of a suicide bomber in 2003. Sarri survived, and started an organization called "Strength to Strength," which offers terror victims and their families psychological support. She recommended a psychologist for me, and I saw him once a week for the month I was home. I told him how I dreamed about Ezra often.

29. Sarri also invited me to Strength to Strength events while I was home, and asked me to speak about the attack. My high school and other schools in the area also asked me to speak about the attack. Speaking about the attack was difficult at first, but eventually, it got easier.

30. My parents didn't want me to go back to Israel, but I did anyway. One of the things I was dreading about going back to Israel was Ezra's empty bed. My friends attended to that by volunteering to sleep in his bed. Still, it was strange to be in our room without Ezra. I continued to

dream about him. I also didn't sit by a window on a bus or a van, and I didn't travel like I had before. I was scared. I had watched Ezra get shot and that stayed with me.

31. I've kept in touch with Ezra's family. During the month I was home from Israel for Ezra's funeral, I visited them four times. During the first year I was home from Israel, I visited them about six times. I've gone to his brothers' bar mitzvahs, and I visit them on the anniversary on his death. Sometimes I go on a random weekend just to be with them, and I'll sleep in Ezra's room. Every Friday night, his parents read letters people sent them after he died. They have hundreds of letters.

32. In 2017, the U.S. State Department got in touch with me and told me that the terrorist was on trial, and I was invited to attend. I went with my mother. Michael Benzakein, another passenger on the van, and Michael's father, went too. Ezra's mother, aunt and uncle were also there. We sat on one side of the courtroom and the terrorist's family members sat on the other. They greeted him proudly when he entered the courtroom. Michael testified at the trial about the attack, and the terrorist's family appeared pleased when he described Ezra being shot.

33. I graduated Queens College this year, and was accepted into the New York Police Department Police Academy. My goal since the attack has been to study counterterrorism. I want to stop terrorists like the one who killed Ezra.

Date: October 16, 2019

/s/ Jason Geller
Jason Geller